

BILL NO. 92-66  
AS AMENDED

COUNTY COUNCIL  
OF  
HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND

BILL NO. 92-66  
(as amended)

Introduced by Council President Wilson at the request of the County Executive  
Legislative Day No. 92-21 Date July 7, 1992

AN ACT to add new Chapter 29, Alarm Systems, to the Harford County Code, as amended, to provide for the establishment of fees for excessive false alarm signals.

By the Council, July 7, 1992  
Introduced, read first time, ordered posted and public hearing scheduled  
on: August 4, 1992  
at: 6:30 P.M.

By Order: Doris Paulsen, Secretary

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Having been posted and notice of time and place of hearing and title of Bill having been published according to the Charter, a public hearing was held on August 4, 1992, and concluded on, August 4, 1992

Doris Paulsen, Secretary

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW. [Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law. Underlining indicates language added to Bill by amendment. Language lined through indicates matter stricken out of Bill by amendment.

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AS AMENDED

1 Section 1. Be It Enacted By the County Council of Harford  
2 County, Maryland, that new Chapter 29, Alarm Systems, be and is  
3 hereby added to the Harford County Code, as amended, all to read as  
4 follows:

5 CHAPTER 29. ALARM SYSTEMS.

6 ARTICLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

7 SECTION 29-1. PURPOSE.

8 THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE IS TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS AND  
9 REGULATE THE VARIOUS TYPES OF INTRUSION, HOLD-UP, AND OTHER  
10 EMERGENCY SIGNALS FROM ALARM USERS THAT REQUIRE POLICE RESPONSE OR  
11 INVESTIGATION.

12 SECTION 29-2. DEFINITIONS.

13 UNLESS IT IS APPARENT FROM THE CONTEXT THAT ANOTHER MEANING IS  
14 INTENDED, THE FOLLOWING TERMS, PHRASES, WORDS, AND THEIR  
15 DERIVATIONS SHALL HAVE THE MEANING GIVEN HEREIN. WHEN NOT  
16 INCONSISTENT WITH THE CONTEXT, WORDS USED IN THE PRESENT TENSE  
17 INCLUDE THE FUTURE, WORDS USED IN THE PLURAL NUMBER INCLUDE THE  
18 SINGULAR NUMBER AND WORDS IN THE SINGULAR NUMBER INCLUDE THE PLURAL  
19 NUMBER. THE WORD "SHALL" IS ALWAYS MANDATORY AND NOT MERELY  
20 DIRECTORY.

21 ALARM SYSTEM -- AN ASSEMBLY OF EQUIPMENT AND DEVICES,  
22 INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, AUTOMATIC DIALING DEVICES,  
23 AUTOMATIC HOLD-UP ALARM SYSTEMS, BURGLAR ALARM SYSTEMS, AND  
24 HOLD-UP ALARM SYSTEMS, AS THOSE TERMS ARE DEFINED IN THIS  
25 ORDINANCE, ARRANGED TO SIGNAL THE PRESENCE OF A HAZARD  
26 REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION AND TO WHICH POLICE ARE EXPECTED  
27 TO RESPOND. THIS DEFINITION DOES NOT INCLUDE ALARMS

1 ON MOTOR VEHICLES OR FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS. IF, HOWEVER, AN  
2 ALARM SYSTEM ON A MOTOR VEHICLE IS CONNECTED WITH AN ALARM  
3 SYSTEM ON PREMISES, THE SYSTEM IS AN ALARM SYSTEM AS DEFINED  
4 IN THIS ORDINANCE. THIS DEFINITION ALSO DOES NOT INCLUDE  
5 ALARM SYSTEMS THAT ARE USED ONLY TO ALERT OR SIGNAL PERSONS  
6 LOCATED WITHIN THE PREMISES IN WHICH THE ALARM SYSTEM IS  
7 LOCATED OF AN ATTEMPTED UNAUTHORIZED INTRUSION OR HOLDUP  
8 ATTEMPT. IF SUCH A SYSTEM, HOWEVER, EMPLOYS AN AUDIBLE  
9 SIGNAL OR A FLASHING LIGHT OR BEACON DESIGNED TO SIGNAL  
10 PERSONS OUTSIDE THE PREMISES, SUCH A SYSTEM SHALL BE SUBJECT  
11 TO THE PROVISION OF THIS ORDINANCE.

12 ALARM USER -- ANY PERSON OWNING, OCCUPYING, OR CONTROLLING ANY  
13 BUILDING OR PREMISE, IN HARFORD COUNTY, IN, ON, OR  
14 AT WHICH AN ALARM SYSTEM IS MAINTAINED. FOR  
15 PURPOSES OF THIS ORDINANCE, ANY TENANT, LESSEE,  
16 LICENSEE, OR INVITEE WHO OR WHICH CAUSES AN ALARM  
17 SYSTEM TO BE MAINTAINED WITHIN HARFORD COUNTY SHALL  
18 BE DEEMED TO BE AN ALARM USER SUBJECT TO THIS  
19 ORDINANCE.

20 AUTOMATIC DIALING SERVICE -- AN ALARM SYSTEM WHICH  
21 AUTOMATICALLY SENDS OVER REGULAR TELEPHONE LINES, BY DIRECT  
22 CONNECTION OR OTHERWISE, A PRE-RECORDED VOICE MESSAGE OR  
23 CODED SIGNAL INDICATING THE EXISTENCE OF AN EMERGENCY  
24 SITUATION THAT THE ALARM SYSTEM IS DESIGNATED TO DETECT.

25 AUTOMATIC HOLDUP ALARM SYSTEM -- AN ALARM SYSTEM IN WHICH THE  
26 SIGNAL TRANSMISSION IS INITIATED BY THE ACTION OF THE  
27 INTRUDER.

28 BURGLAR ALARM SYSTEM -- AN ALARM SYSTEM SIGNALING AN ENTRY OR

1           ATTEMPTED ENTRY INTO THE AREA PROTECTED BY THE SYSTEM.  
2           COUNTY -- HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND.  
3           DIRECT CONNECT -- AN ALARM SYSTEM WHICH HAS THE CAPABILITY OF  
4           TRANSMITTING SYSTEM SIGNALS DIRECTLY TO THE  
5           SHERIFF'S OFFICE COMMUNICATION CENTER AND/OR THE  
6           BEL AIR BARRACK OF THE MARYLAND STATE POLICE.  
7           FALSE ALARM -- THE ACTIVATION OF AN ALARM SYSTEM, TO INCLUDE  
8           AN AUTOMATIC DIALING DEVICE, THROUGH MECHANICAL  
9           FAILURE, MALFUNCTION, IMPROPER INSTALLATION, OR THE  
10          NEGLIGENCE OF THE OWNER OR LESSEE OF AN ALARM  
11          SYSTEM OR OF HIS EMPLOYEES OR AGENTS THAT RESULTS  
12          IN A RESPONSE BY THE HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S  
13          OFFICE. SUCH TERMINOLOGY DOES NOT INCLUDE, FOR  
14          EXAMPLE, ALARMS CAUSED BY HURRICANES, TORNADOES,  
15          EARTHQUAKES, ELECTRICAL STORMS OR OTHER VIOLENT  
16          CONDITIONS, OR AN ALARM SIGNAL ACTIVATED DURING THE  
17          FIRST SIXTY (60) CALENDAR DAYS AFTER AN ALARM  
18          SYSTEM IS INSTALLED.  
19          HOLDUP ALARM SYSTEM -- AN ALARM SYSTEM SIGNALING A ROBBERY OR  
20          ATTEMPTED ROBBERY.  
21          LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY -- THE HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
22          OR ANY AUTHORIZED AGENT THEREOF, TO INCLUDE THE MARYLAND  
23          STATE POLICE.  
24          LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVE -- THE SHERIFF OF HARFORD COUNTY OR  
25          HIS DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVES.  
26          PERSON -- ANY PERSON, FIRM, PARTNERSHIP, ASSOCIATION,  
27          CORPORATION, COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION OF ANY KIND.

1     SECTION 29-3.   DIRECT CONNECTIONS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.

2             NO DIRECT CONNECTIONS SHALL BE PERMITTED IN HARFORD COUNTY  
3     UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY THE SHERIFF OR THE COMMANDER OF THE BEL AIR  
4     BARRACK OF THE MARYLAND STATE POLICE.

5     SECTION 29-4.   EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE.

6             A.   EACH ALARM USER, AT HIS EXPENSE, IS REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN  
7             ALL COMPONENTS OF HIS ALARM SYSTEM IN GOOD WORKING ORDER  
8             AT ALL TIMES TO INSURE THAT THE SENSORY MECHANISM USED IN  
9             CONNECTION WITH SUCH DEVICE IS ADJUSTED TO SUPPRESS FALSE  
10            INDICATIONS OF EMERGENCIES.    THE DEVICE SHALL NOT BE  
11            ACTIVATED BY IMPULSES DUE TO SHORT FLASHES OF LIGHT, WIND  
12            NOISES, VEHICULAR NOISE OR OTHER FORCES UNRELATED TO  
13            GENUINE ALARMS.

14            B.   NO ALARM SYSTEM DESIGNED TO TRANSMIT EMERGENCY MESSAGES  
15            SHALL BE TESTED OR DEMONSTRATED WITHOUT FIRST NOTIFYING  
16            THE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER OF THE HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S  
17            OFFICE AND/OR THE MARYLAND STATE POLICE, BEL AIR BARRACK.

18            C.   NEW INSTALLATIONS SHALL BE PROVIDED WITH A 60-DAY GRACE  
19            PERIOD BEFORE THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 29-6 APPLY.

20     SECTION 29-5.   EXCESSIVE FALSE ALARM SIGNALS.

21            NO PERSON SHALL ALLOW, PERMIT, CAUSE OR FAIL TO PREVENT THE  
22            EMISSION, FOR ANY REASON, BY ANY ALARM USED BY HIM, OR ANY ALARM  
23            SERVING A PREMISES OR A BUILDING OCCUPIED AND CONTROLLED BY SUCH  
24            PERSON, OF MORE THAN THREE FALSE ALARMS WITHIN ANY CALENDAR MONTH  
25            OR MORE THAN EIGHT FALSE ALARMS WITHIN ANY CALENDAR YEAR.   THE  
26            EMISSION BY ANY ALARM SYSTEM OF EITHER MORE THAN THREE FALSE ALARMS  
27            IN ANY CALENDAR MONTH OR MORE THAN EIGHT FALSE ALARMS IN ANY

1 CALENDAR YEAR IS DEEMED TO BE EXCESSIVE AND CONSTITUTES A SERIOUS  
2 PUBLIC NUISANCE, AND IS SUBJECT TO SERVICE CHARGES SET OUT IN THE  
3 SECTION FOLLOWING.

4 SECTION 29-6. FALSE ALARM SERVICE CHARGE; COLLECTION.

5 A. FOR RESPONSE TO EXCESSIVE FALSE ALARMS BY THE SHERIFF'S  
6 OFFICE, THE ALARM USER SHALL BE CHARGED A SERVICE FEE BY  
7 THE COUNTY OF TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS (\$25.00) FOR THE FIRST  
8 ALARM IN EXCESS OF THREE FALSE ALARMS IN ANY CALENDAR  
9 MONTH, FIFTY DOLLARS (\$50.00) FOR THE SECOND FALSE ALARM  
10 IN EXCESS OF THREE IN ANY CALENDAR MONTH, AND SEVENTY-FIVE  
11 DOLLARS (\$75.00) FOR THE THIRD AND EACH SUCCESSIVE FALSE  
12 ALARM IN EXCESS OF THREE IN ANY CALENDAR MONTH. THE  
13 EMISSION OF THE FIRST AND ALL OTHER FALSE ALARMS IN EXCESS  
14 OF EIGHT FALSE ALARMS WITHIN ANY CALENDAR YEAR WILL BE  
15 SUBJECT TO A FEE OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY DOLLARS  
16 (\$150.00) PER FALSE ALARM. THE SHERIFF SHALL DETERMINE  
17 WHETHER A FALSE ALARM HAS OCCURRED AND THE FREQUENCY OF  
18 SUCH FALSE ALARMS. THE ALARM USER WILL BE NOTIFIED BY THE  
19 COMMUNICATION SECTION EACH TIME AN ALARM OCCURS. THE  
20 COUNTY TREASURER OR HIS DESIGNEE SHALL NOTIFY ALARM USERS  
21 OF AMOUNTS OWED TO THE COUNTY AND SHALL MAKE DEMAND  
22 THEREFORE, PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION.

23 B. ONCE NOTIFIED BY THE TREASURER'S OFFICE, THE USER WILL  
24 HAVE THIRTY DAYS TO PAY ANY SAID SERVICE CHARGES.

25 C. FALSE ALARM SERVICE CHARGES FOR BUILDING OWNERS SHALL BE  
26 TREATED IN THE SAME MANNER AS PROPERTY TAXES FOR  
27 ENFORCEMENT OF PAYMENTS AS PROVIDED IN SECTION 123-32 OF

THE HARFORD COUNTY CODE, AS AMENDED. TENANTS WHO HAVE  
INSTALLED ALARM SYSTEMS SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR FALSE  
ALARM SERVICE CHARGES.

D. DELINQUENT FALSE ALARM SERVICE CHARGES SHALL BEAR INTEREST  
AT THE SAME RATE PER MONTH OR ANY FRACTION THEREOF AS  
PROVIDED IN SECTION 123-27 OF THE HARFORD COUNTY CODE.  
INVOICES FOR FALSE ALARM SERVICE CHARGES ARE TO BE PAID  
WITHIN THIRTY DAYS OF THE DATE RENDERED AND DEEMED  
DELINQUENT IF NOT PAID. ANY ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OR LEGAL  
FEES THE COUNTY INCURS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE FEES SHALL  
BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ALARM USER.

E. THE COUNTY MAY PROCEED BY A SUIT IN A COURT OF COMPETENT  
JURISDICTION TO COLLECT SAID CHARGE AFTER DEMAND THEREFOR  
HAS BEEN MADE BY THE COUNTY AND THE PAYMENT THEREOF  
REFUSED BY THE ALARM USER.

~~29-8~~ SECTION 29-7. DISBURSEMENT OF SERVICE CHARGES.

SERVICE CHARGES WILL BE DEPOSITED TO THE GENERAL FUND.

Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted that this Act shall take  
effect sixty (60) calendar days from the date it becomes law.

EFFECTIVE: October 5, 1992

92-66

AS AMENDED

BY THE COUNCIL

BILL NO. 92-66 As Amended

Read the third time.

Passed: LSD 92-25 (August 4, 1992)

Failed of Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

By Order

Doris Poulsen, Secretary

Sealed with the County Seal and presented to the County Executive  
for her approval this 5th day of August,  
1992 at 3:00 o'clock P.M.

Doris Poulsen, Secretary

BY THE EXECUTIVE

Eileen M. Lehmann  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

APPROVED:

Date August 6, 1992

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, (No. 92-66 As Amended), having been approved by  
the County Executive and returned to the Council, becomes law on  
August 6, 1992.

Doris Poulsen, Secretary

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 5, 1992

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